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A

SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

GRAVEL PIT MEETING,

IN HACKNEY,

APRIL 19TH, 1793,

Being the day appointed for a General Fast.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S. &c.

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THE PREFACE.

THE obſerving of days appointed by civil governors for the purpoſe of religious acts, as of public humiliation or thankſgiving, being objected to by many of my brethren, I wiſh to inform them, in this Preface, of the light in which I conſider it, as a vindication of my own practice.

Since ſocieties of men are as dependant on the Supreme Being as individuals, *public* worſhip is as proper in itſelf as *private*, and if a whole nation could be aſſembled in one place, and a perſon could be heard as ſpeaking for them all, this would be as proper as the worſhip of a ſingle pariſh. But what cannot be done in one aſſembly may be done in many, and if any one time (which is on ſeveral accounts moſt proper) be fixed upon for any act of national worſhip, it muſt be done by perſons inveſted with civil authority. With us it is done by the King's proclamation, but as this has not, in this country, the force of law, it can only be conſidered as an advice, or requiſition,

quiſition, not enforced by any civil penalty; and both the Quakers and many Diſſenters are well known to diſobey this requiſition with impunity.

But it is ſaid we are called upon to do a thing that we diſapprove. Many perſons think the war, in which we are engaged, to be *unjuſt*, and yet we are called upon to pray for ſucceſs in it, as a *juſt* and *neceſſary* war. Still, however, if we think the ſituation of the country to be ſuch as to give propriety to an act of public humiliation and prayer, we may obey the civil magiſtrate in aſſembling on the day that he ſhall appoint, but uſe our own judgment with reſpect to the manner in which the ſervice ſhall be conducted; and we all know that, think and act as we pleaſe, the Almighty will be directed by his own wiſdom, and not by ours.

Let us ſuppoſe a number of perſons on board a ſhip, ſo long becalmed as to be in danger of periſhing for want of proviſions, and the captain to order, or adviſe, them to pray, either by themſelves, or in parties, as they ſhall think proper; and, conceiving that a wind from the eaſt would ſooneſt bring them to a ſafe harbour, ſhould farther direct them

to pray for *it*, while ſeveral of the crew ſhould be of opinion, that a wind from the weſt would ſerve them better; might they not all go to their devotions at the ſame time, though, following their own beſt judgments, they ſhould pray for whatever wind they thought proper, or with true piety pray for relief in general, or, with more piety ſtill, content themſelves with expreſſing their entire reſignation to the will of God, whether he ſhould think proper to relieve them or not?

On this principle, my predeceſſor Dr. Price, as well as myſelf, and many other Diſſenters, always obſerved the days appointed for public faſts in the courſe of the American war, though we by no means adopted the language of the prayers publiſhed by authority for the uſe of the clergy on thoſe occaſions.

It cannot be ſuppoſed that, in a whole nation, conſiſting of ſeveral millions of perſons, there ſhould be only one opinion with reſpect to all, or almoſt any, meaſures of adminiſtration. It may be taken for granted, that if they think at all, they will think differently; and conſequently, if they be honeſt men, they will be diſpoſed to act differently, except that in caſes of a merely *civil* nature, they will

think it right to acquieſce in the deciſion of the majority, whatever it be. For without this the ſociety muſt be diſſolved.

I will take this opportunity, however, of obſerving, that as it is right in the minority to ſubmit to the deciſion of the majority, it will be wiſe in the majority to bear with any mere difference of opinion in the minority, and to throw no impediment in the way of the freeſt diſcuſſion of their differences. For this is the only method of detecting error, ſpeculative or practical, and of improving the condition of man; and no inſtitution of man can be abſolutely perfect.

Every attempt to ſuppreſs opinion by force, is ſuch a confeſſion of the weakneſs of any cauſe, and of an utter inability to maintain it by reaſon and argument, that there is no inſtance in hiſtory in which it has anſwered, or in which it has not operated to overturn what it was intended to eſtabliſh. What did an *Index Expurgatorius*, copious as it was, do for the Church of Rome? On this account I am concerned to ſee, what looks like the commencement of an Index Expurgatorius for the conſtitution of England.

In caſes in which the commands of man are

apprehended to interfere with the commands of God, there can be no heſitation which we ought to prefer; and therefore a wiſe nation will carefully avoid all unneceſſary interference of civil government with matters of religion. For as men who think at all, will think differently, to enforce obedience to any commands, which ſome perſons may apprehend to be contrary to the laws of God, and the dictates of conſcience, may be to alienate the affections of the moſt valuable members of the community, and lead to their baniſhment and extirpation, which cannot be for the advantage of any ſtate.

This is my apology for the freedom with which I have, upon all occaſions, advanced ſuch opinions, as have appeared to me to be true and important, though contrary to thoſe which have the countenance of the ſtate, and alſo againſt all connexion between religion and civil government; and a good opportunity of repeating my teſtimony againſt this abuſe of religion having occurred in this diſcourſe, I have not declined availing myſelf of it.

In no other reſpects will it be pretended, that I have, on this occaſion, obtruded my opinion with reſpect to any political ſubject.

If perſons of all parties would cultivate that ſpirit of piety, which it has been my endeavour to inculcate in this diſcourſe, it would tend to leſſen their animoſity againſt each other, and would either unite them in the ſame views of things, or remove every real inconvenience from the circumſtance of their differing.

I have not, I own, concurred with the views of the governing powers of this nation, in praying for the ſucceſs of our arms in this war, any more than I did in that with America; becauſe I do not think that ſuch ſucceſs would be of any advantage to this country, and in this I am by no means ſingular. But I ſincerely pray that the war may terminate in the firmer eſtabliſhment of the liberties and happineſs of this country, and of every other country in Europe; and whether it be victory or defeat, that will moſt conduce to this end, I ſincerely wiſh and pray for it.

I have not ſcrupled to intimate my apprehenſions, that the preſent war, whatever be its progreſs or termination, will only be the beginning of troubles in Europe; and in this, I own, I have greater apprehenſions from the ſucceſs, than from the defeat, of the preſent com-

combination againſt France. But I do not pretend to prophecy, and I ſincerely pray that the evils which I fear are approaching, may be deferred as long as poſſible, and that the wiſdom and moderation of our councils may contribute to ſo good an end. Let this country treat me as it will, I ſhall always remember with ſatisfaction the happineſs I have enjoyed in it, as more than a balance for the injuries I have received from it. I am conſcious that I have always meant to act the part of a good citizen, whether my ſervices have been acceptable or not, and however I may be diſpoſed of, I ſhall always be a ſincere friend and well-wiſher to my native country.

Mr. Burke has ſaid in the Houſe of Commons, that I have "declared hoſtility to the "conſtitution of this country." But after being publickly and repeatedly called upon to produce any authority for his aſſertion, it now ſufficiently appears, that he has neither ability to maintain his charge, nor virtue to retract it. If I be an enemy to this country, I was ſo during more than twenty years of my acquaintance with him. For the freeſt of my writings, in which I declared myſelf

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moſt hoſtile to the civil eſtabliſhment of chriſtianity, as a part of the conſtitution of this country, was publiſhed before I knew him; and of this he never in all that time intimated the leaſt diſapprobation. If there be men who are really dangerous in any country, they are ſuch calumniators as he; and if any miſchief is to be apprehended to this country from political writings, it has been wholly occaſioned by his own.

With ſome whoſe apprehenſions are greater than their wiſdom, every perſon who propoſes any reformation in the conſtitution, is an enemy to it, and to wiſh for a change in the conſtitution, is to be an enemy to the country. But ſurely a man may be a friend both to his country and the conſtitution of it, without thinking either of them to be the beſt poſſible, or the beſt in the world. All that reaſon requires is, that a man conform to the laws, and ſupport the government of his country when called upon to do it; and this I ſhould be ready to do if I lived in Turkey, and had been protected by the government of it; protection and ſupport being reciprocal duties.

Even in this moſt arbitrary government, I ſhould

ſhould not ſuppoſe that it would be deemed treaſonable, or ſeditious, to maintain in argument, that there might be, or that there actually were, better forms of government than theirs. The expectations of ſome perſons with reſpect to the government of this country, by *King, Lords, and Commons*, are as ridiculous as the conduct of the knights errant in the days of chivalry, ſo much regretted by Mr. Burke, in which they thought themſelves obliged to maintain, that all the ladies to whoſe ſervice they had devoted themſelves, were, without exception, the moſt beautiful and accompliſhed of women.

All good is relative, and therefore what is the beſt for Engliſhmen, with their peculiar habits and prejudices, may not be the beſt for all nations. And the ſyſtem that anſwers its purpoſe ſo well, as that it ſhall not be worth while to riſk any material change, or revolution, may yet be capable of much improvement. Indeed, if the injuries it receives from time be not repaired, it will at length become quite another thing, from that which had been the ſubject of our encomiums. It will be, to uſe a compariſon not quite ſo grave as the occaſion might require, like repeating

peating to an old woman of eighty, the poems that were addreſſed to her when ſhe was twenty. The old lady might be well enough pleaſed with the flattery, and the flatterer might ſucceed in gaining her good graces, and ſomething to compenſate for the ridicule to which he would expoſe himſelf; but he certainly would make himſelf the ſubject of ridicule. In this ſituation, according to uncontradicted report, ſtands Mr. Burke.

As my *Letter to the Editor of the Morning Chronicle*, in reply to the calumny of Mr. Burke, has only appeared in the News Papers, and many of my readers may not have ſeen it, I ſhall ſubjoin it to this Preface.

Now that I have occaſion to mention the ſubject of *calumny*, by which I have already ſuffered ſo much, and, in the preſent ſtate of men's minds, am expoſed to ſuffer ſtill more, I ſhall obſerve that, in an account of the ſtate of Birmingham, tranſmitted to the Miniſtry on the 14th of December laſt, and which is become the ſubject of much converſation, it is ſaid, that "the only people there from whom "any thing is to be apprehended, are ſome "young men brought up under Prieſtley."

This information could only proceed from

ignorance

ignorance or malice. All the young men to whom I ever gave any lectures in Birmingham, were thoſe of my own congregation, on the ſubject of *natural and revealed religion*, as I now do at Hackney, and to whom I never mentioned the ſubject of *politics*. And I think I can engage for all of them, that, whatever be their political opinions, which they could not learn from me, they may be depended upon, from a principle of religion, for a quiet ſubmiſſion to the laws of their country, whether they approve of them or not.

To the Editor of the Morning Chronicle.

SIR,

Taking it for granted that your account of Mr. Burke's ſpeech, in the debate on Mr. Sheridan's late motion, may be depended upon, I beg leave, through the channel of your Paper, to aſk him, what authority he had for aſſerting, as he did, that "I gave my name to "the ſentiments in the Correſpondence of "the Revolution Society in England with the "Jacobin Societies in France; ſentiments "adverſe to our Conſtitution?" That Correſpondence I have ſeen, but have not yet read. I am not, nor ever was, a member of any

any political ſociety whatever; nor did I ever ſign any paper originating with any of them. This I do not ſay becauſe I have any objection to ſuch ſocieties, but my ſtudies and purſuits have been of a different kind.

I alſo wiſh to aſk Mr. Burke what authority he has for aſſerting, that "I was made a citi-"zen of France, becauſe I had declared hoſ-"tility to the Conſtitution of England?" This aſſertion, like the preceding, is nothing elſe than a malignant calumny; being an untruth, which, in the preſent ſtate of things, is calculated to do me the greateſt injury. I was made a citizen of France at the ſame time with Mr. Wilberforce, and ſeveral others; and I had no more previous knowledge of the meaſure than he had; and will Mr. Burke ſay that Mr. Wilberforce was made a citizen of France "becauſe *he* had declared hoſtility to "the Conſtitution of this country?"

Though few of my publications relate to politics, I have more than once expreſſed myſelf in favour of our Conſtitution, and I call upon Mr. Burke to ſhew that I have ever written any thing that can, by any fair conſtruction, be ſaid to be *againſt* it. I conceive myſelf to be a much better friend to the true principles

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of it than he now is. When Mr. Burke and I were acquainted, and we uſed to converſe on the ſubject of politics (for we had hardly any other common topic) our ſentiments reſpecting the Conſtitution, and the principles of liberty in general, were, as I then conceived, the ſame. Had I been in his preſent ſituation with reſpect to the favours of government, my opinions might have changed as his have done; but continuing in the ſame ſituation in that reſpect, my views of things have continued the ſame.

I would obſerve on this occaſion, that I do not ſee the wiſdom of making perſons enemies of the Conſtitution whether they will or not. If the time ſhould come, that this Conſtitution ſhall want the aid of all its friends, thoſe who are now the moſt forward to declare their attachment to it, may not be the moſt to be depended upon. If we learn any thing from hiſtory or obſervation, it is that boaſting and inſolence are generally followed by cowardice, and that patient ſuffering is the mark of the trueſt courage.

Mr. Burke's ſneering at me for "not having been ſufficiently rewarded for my great "ſervices in *philoſophy*, *politics*, and *religion*,"

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is a mean inſult, in one baſking in the ſunſhine of power, on an old acquaintance who is under its frowns. What does Mr. Burke know of my ſervices in philoſophy, or religion; when the probability is, that he is utterly unacquainted with any thing that I have written on theſe ſubjects? When have I made any boaſt of my ſervices, whatever they be, or intimated any expectation of a reward? though every man who gives his time to any important ſubject deſerves the thanks of his countrymen, whatever may have been his ſucceſs. However, far from expecting any reward, I ſhall think myſelf very happy if I eſcape without farther puniſhment. But that party ſpirit, which is ſo much inflamed by the writings and ſpeeches of Mr. Burke, gives me but little encouragement to expect ſo much.

Submitting theſe obſervations to the cooler thoughts (if he have any ſuch) of Mr. Burke, and of your numerous readers, among ſome of whom I hope to meet with candour,

I remain, Sir,

Your very humble ſervant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Clapton,
March 7, 1793.

FAST SERMON,

FOR 1793.

God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble. Pſalm xlvi. 1.

MY CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

WE are called upon by the governors of the nation, alarmed, no doubt, at the preſent ſerious and very critical ſtate of public affairs, to humble ourſelves before God, by faſting and prayer, that, as the ſupreme diſpoſer of all events, he may be pleaſed to avert the calamities with which we are threatened. With this call, we voluntarily and cheerfully comply. For though, in every thing reſpecting God, and our duty to him, we diſclaim all human authority, praying when and how we pleaſe, we are ready to join with any of our brethren, of whatever denomination, in any act of religion in which we are equally concerned.

None, I truſt, are more ſenſible than we of this Chriſtian Society are, of the univerſal dominion of God; that the fate of our nation, and of every other nation, is at all times in his hands; that nothing can come to paſs without his appointment or permiſſion; and that he never appoints or permits any thing but for the beſt of purpoſes, reſpecting the happineſs of his creatures, of whom he is the true and common parent.

In this intereſting ſituation, as creatures before their Creator, we have nothing to do with what are called *politics*. We neither praiſe nor blame, thoſe who have the conduct of public affairs, for bringing us into this ſituation, or even conſider whether they have brought us into this ſituation or not. We have at this time nothing to do with the juſtice or injuſtice, according to the rules of human judgment, of the war in which we are engaged, or of any other meaſures of adminiſtration. For we are now to conſider *primary*, and not *ſecondary* cauſes. We are to conſider every thing that has taken place as the act of God, and not that of man, whom the Supreme Being only employs as his inſtruments, to bring about his great deſigns.

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In other ſituations, our judgments being as free as thoſe of other men, we may freely praiſe or blame. We may, with our governors call the war in which we are engaged, *juſt* and *neceſſary*, or with many others, unjuſt and unneceſſary: for with reſpect to things of this nature, men will judge differently, according to the different views they have of things. But with reſpect to God, whoſe providence we now acknowledge, we muſt ſuppoſe every thing to be right; that if calamity await us, it was proper, in the general plan of things, that it ſhould befall us, and therefore that we muſt ſubmit to it, as under the righteous government of God; having recourſe to ſuch methods as are neceſſary to regain his favour, by making ourſelves the proper objects of it: that whatever it be that has been made the inſtrument of our affliction, it may be removed.

I do not know any portion of ſcripture more proper for the ſubject of our meditations, according to this general view of things, and the preſent circumſtances of the nation, than the whole of the pſalm from which my text is taken. It contains ſuch ſentiments, as, if properly impreſſed upon our minds, cannot

fail to exhibit what is moſt calamitous and alarming in it, in the moſt favourable light that it will bear. It ſhews us the hand of God in all the great events that affect the welfare of ſociety; thence leading us to expect a happy concluſion of them, and in the mean time to make the beſt uſe of the ſcenes before us.

It is true that, in the language of this pſalm, *deſolation is now ſpreading over the earth.* The flames of war are extending themſelves, in a manner unknown in any period of our times, and threatening us with calamities altogether new, and therefore ſuch as we cannot tell how to guard againſt, or to prepare for. But we are here reminded, that though the paſſions and the hands of men are employed as the inſtruments, they are the deſolations that *God* is making in the earth; and we are invited to view them with attention and without dread, as any other of the works of God. *Come, behold the works of the Lord, what deſolations he hath made in the earth.*

We are alſo led by the pſalmiſt, in the darkeſt ſcenes of providence, to put our truſt in that Being who directs the whole, not doubting but that he will bring good out of

all the evil. *Be ſtill, and know that I am God. I will be glorified in the Heathen. I will be exalted in the earth.* And if God be finally glorified, we may be aſſured, that the iſſue of all will be the virtue and happineſs of men. He is the common parent of all mankind, and theſe are the corrections that he is adminiſtering for our common benefit.

From this pſalm we learn, that it becomes good men in particular to have an eye to the hand of God in all events, and never to forget, that, tempeſtuous as the times may be, there is an able though inviſible pilot at the helm; a pilot who commands not only the ſhip, but the waves themſelves; ſo that we have all the reaſon in the world to make ourſelves perfectly eaſy as to the final iſſue. *God is our refuge in ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midſt of the ſea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains ſhake with the ſwelling thereof. The Lord of Hoſts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

Laſtly, we are here taught to aſſure ourſelves, that when wars, like diſeaſes or any

other evils, ſhall have anſwered the end for which they were ſent, (and we cannot doubt but that they will anſwer this end, and no other) he who raiſed the ſtorm will cauſe it to ceaſe. *He maketh wars to ceaſe from the ends of the earth. He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the ſpear in ſunder. He burneth the chariot in the fire.*

In order to throw our thoughts into a proper channel on this occaſion, I ſhall, in this diſcourſe, in the firſt place, conſider war as the work of God, ſhewing that, calamitous as it is, it is, like all other evils, calculated to produce many good effects; and is therefore no unſuitable means to be employed by the benevolent Ruler of the univerſe. In the ſecond place I ſhall conſider what we, as under the moral government of God, muſt do in order to remove the evil of war, and every other judgment inflicted upon us by a wiſe and juſt providence; and in the laſt place I ſhall endeavour to ſuggeſt ſuch obſervations, as appear to me to reſult from the doctrine on which I ſhall inſiſt, and to be particularly adapted to the preſent ſtate of the nation.

In the firſt place I propoſe to conſider war as the work of God, ſhewing that, calamitous

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as it is, it is calculated to produce many good effects, and is therefore no unſuitable means to be employed by the benevolent Ruler of the univerſe, though generally implying the greateſt guilt in *men*, who, to gratify their ambition, revenge, and other paſſions, knowingly involve millions of their fellow creatures, for whom they have no feeling of compaſſion, in the moſt complicated diſtreſs.

War does not materially differ from other afflictions, by which God is pleaſed to inſtruct the world, and correct the vices of it. The diſcipline is, no doubt, ſevere, but it is calculated to be ſalutary. A ſtate of perfect ſecurity, we well know, is highly unfavourable to virtue, and conſequently to happineſs. Without the alarms of war, mankind, in the early and rude ſtate of ſociety, would have ſunk into ſuch a ſtate of indulgence, as they were never known to enjoy without ſinking into vices fatal to the health of their bodies, and to the tranquillity of their minds; and having no diſtant enemy to unite them among themſelves, and promote thoſe virtues which ariſe from a ſenſe of having a common cauſe and intereſt, as benevolence and public ſpirit; inſtead of one enemy, who would give men

diſturbance now and then, they would in fact have many, who would have it in their power to do them perpetual injuries; and they might ſuffer more by continual ill offices, from thoſe with whom they had a conſtant and neceſſary intercourſe, than from an enemy more diſtant. Alſo a ſtate of great exertion, ſuch as war makes neceſſary, is always a ſtate of great animation; and this is better for man than a ſtate of languor, which, till men be duly improved by diſcipline and inſtruction, they would naturally ſink into.

War, by operating like the peſtilence, and other diſeaſes, and various calamitous accidents, in rendering life precarious, is the diſcipline of a wiſe and kind Providence, having very obvious uſes. Since a conſtant ſenſe of the uncertainty of life, and of all its enjoyments, is far better calculated to form excellent characters, in the preſent ſtate of our minds in other reſpects, than the idea of abſolute certainty with reſpect to life, or any thing to be enjoyed in it. It teaches us caution, vigilance, vigorous exertion, fortitude, and reſignation to the will of God; qualities without which, there would be nothing to be greatly admired or eſteemed in human nature. To

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ſuppoſe that men might have been trained to theſe virtues without the calamities of war, or diſcipline of a ſimilar nature, which render life and property uncertain, is what we are by no means authorized to do by obſervation or experience.

Beſides theſe benefits reſulting from a ſtate of war, as from evils of other kinds, which make a neceſſary part of the general diſcipline of the world, many poſitive benefits have been indirectly derived from it. The exerciſe of the ingenuity of man, in deviſing the means of offence and defence in war, led the way to the diſcovery of the qualities of metals, improvements in mechanics, and other things highly uſeful in times of peace; diſcoveries, which it is probable that nothing but ſo ſtrong a ſtimulus as reſults from a ſtate of war could have excited man to make.

Conqueſts made by war have contributed to mix, and thereby to civilize, the different nations of the world, when they might otherwiſe have continued much longer in that ſtate of barbariſm, which would have reſulted from this want of intercourſe with each other.

War has alſo been the means of carrying learning and learned men, where they would never

never have gone voluntarily; and thus ſcience, and improvements of various kinds, have had a more rapid ſpread in the world. We complain, and juſtly, of perſecution for conſcience ſake, as the moſt unjuſt and cruel of all wars; conſiſting in the oppreſſion of the wiſe, the virtuous, and the weak, by the ignorant, the wicked, and the ſtrong. But by this means true religion has had a much more ſpeedy and extenſive ſpread in the world, than it could otherwiſe have obtained. Both the peopling and the preſent liberties of the North American States were owing to the oppreſſion of this country; and we cannot ſay that it would ever have been peopled and civilized, by Chriſtian inhabitants, or its liberties have been eſtabliſhed by any other means. At the ſame time then that we juſtly blame the deſigns and the conduct of men, who, to gratify their own paſſions, brought ſo much miſery on their fellow creatures; let us acknowledge and bleſs the hand of God, which by means of ſo much evil, has brought about ſo much good.

But though it cannot be denied that war has been productive of many and great benefits to mankind, it is a kind of diſcipline

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that we ſhall not ſtand in need of, when the world ſhall have paſſed its ſtate of childhood and youth, in which we muſt conſider it at preſent; and when we ſhall be arrived at a ſtate of greater maturity, in which we ſhall be capable of what may be called a more liberal treatment. Having learned wiſdom by long experience, we ſhall be able to proceed in the paths of knowledge, virtue, and happineſs, without thoſe ſeverities which were neceſſary to draw us into them.

Whatever foundation there may be for this compariſon of the whole human race, to the individuals of which it is compoſed, we are expreſsly aſſured in the Scriptures, that the happy time will come, when *wars ſhall ceaſe.* We may therefore conclude, that hereafter they will be no longer neceſſary. *It ſhall come to paſs in the laſt days*, (Iſaiah ii. 2.) *that men ſhall beat their ſwords into ploughſhares, and their ſpears into pruning hooks. Nation ſhall not lift up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more.* This moſt pleaſing proſpect is confirmed by the concurrent teſtimony of many other prophecies. We may therefore look forward to it with the moſt aſſured hope and joy.

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This great event will probably be brought about by natural and adequate cauſes. Men will at length be convinced, though by long and dear-bought experience, that wars have almoſt always been made to gratify the ambition or avarice of a few, at the expence of every thing that is dear to the many. Alſo both a ſpirit of commerce, which is extending every day, and the true principles of chriſtianity, which we cannot but think will be better underſtood and more generally diffuſed, the more attention is given to it, will no doubt greatly contribute to bring about ſo deſirable an end.

In the ſecond place I am to ſhew, what we muſt do in order to remove the calamities of war, or any other judgment inflicted by a wiſe and righteous Providence; and in order to do this, I ſhall take a more particular view of the conduct of divine Providence with reſpect of war, and national calamities of every kind, ſhewing that they do not come without the will of God, and in conſequence of his diſpleaſure; and therefore, that we have no reaſon to expect that the effect will ceaſe till the cauſe be removed.

Now we cannot too often or too ſeriouſly reflect,

reflect, and therefore I repeat the obſervation, that in the ſituation in which we now are, we have nothing to do with the ſhare that *men* have had in the calamities we feel, or thoſe that we fear; but to conſider the hand that *God* has had in them; that, conſidering what we have done to make him our enemy, we may do every thing that is in our power to make him our friend. For the preſent, therefore, let us look off from men, in order to look upwards towards God, and inwards upon ourſelves.

If we believe that the world is under the adminiſtration of divine Providence, (and ſurely he that made the world will not neglect to attend to it; he that formed men will not fail to watch over them) if we believe that nothing can come to paſs through the whole extent of the works of God, without his knowledge and influence, that he *does whatſoever he pleaſes in the armies of heaven above, and among the inhabitants of the earth here beneath*, we muſt believe with the prophet Amos, (iii. 6) that, properly ſpeaking, there is *no evil in any city*, or ſtate, but God is the Author of it; and therefore that the evil will not be removed, till he ſhall think proper to remove

move it, the real occaſion of it being removed in the firſt place.

If the immediate cauſe of our ſufferings be enemies without, or the bad conduct of our rulers at home, (for I mean to comprehend the political views of all parties) ſtill it is by the permiſſion of God, who ruleth among the children of men, that any country has ſuch enemies, or ſuch rulers. Bad miniſters may be obtruded upon an earthly ſovereign, who being no more than a man, may be deceived by men, and miſtake his own intereſt, as well as that of his people; but they cannot be obtruded upon a Being of perfect diſcernment and uncontrouled power.

If David was a *man after God's own heart* for one purpoſe, Nebuchadnezzar was no leſs ſo for another. The proud king of Aſſyria is expreſsly called *a ſtaff in the hand of God* for the puniſhment of various nations, and he could do nothing but what the hand which held the ſtaff directed. In the eye of the world, particular men are ſaid to be *out of their place*, or unfit for it; but in the eye of God, no man is out of his place. Pharaoh himſelf is expreſsly ſaid (Exod. ix. 16) to have been *raiſed up* by God, for one of the greateſt purpoſes

poſes in the courſe of his providence. In fact, every perſon without exception is where God has placed him; and it is arraigning the wiſdom of his providence, to ſay that he has placed him wrong, or that, however men may be diſappointed in him, he is not qualified to act the part that God has given him to act; and if his counſels or conduct bring calamity upon any country, it was preciſely what God intended they ſhould do.

The death of ſeventy thouſand Iſraelites by peſtilence, is aſcribed to the pride and folly of David in ordering the people to be numbered; but then that thought is ſaid to have ariſen in the heart of David, becauſe the Divine Being thought proper to puniſh that people. For in the following manner is the hiſtory of that event introduced. 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. *And again the anger of the Lord was kindled againſt Iſrael, and he moved David againſt them, to ſay, Go number Iſrael and Judah.* So alſo the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the captivity of the Jews by Nebuchadnezzar, were brought about by the infatuation of the laſt of their kings, Zedekiah; but that very calamity had been threatened, and foretold, again and again, before Zedekiah was born, as a puniſhment for

for the long prevailing wickedneſs of the people in general. It is the ſame God who ſtill rules in the affairs of men. The maxims of his government are alſo the ſame. He ſtill puniſhes ſinful nations by means of weak or wicked governors, and by wars and other calamities, occaſioned by the weakneſs or wickedneſs of ſuch governors; *and who ſhall ſay unto him, What doeſt thou?*

It becomes us, therefore, now that we are aſſembled in the preſence of God, to have reſpect to *him*, and to his providence, and to overlook the part that men may have had in our calamities. With reſpect to the war in which we are now engaged, ſome of you will entertain one opinion, and others of you a different one. But on this occaſion we have nothing to do with the opinions, or politics of any party. What we have now to conſider is ſimply this, that it has pleaſed the Ruler of the univerſe to afflict almoſt all Europe with the dreadful calamity of war, and therefore that all we ſuffer, or have to ſuffer, is the conſequence of the divine diſpleaſure; and we are aſſured (Lam. iii. 33) that *he never afflicts willingly, or grieves the children of men.*

What we have to do, then, is, by due humility

mility before God, who *loveth righteouſneſs and hateth iniquity*, and by proper conduct with reſpect to him, to endeavour to recover his favour; ſince he alone can remove the ſcourge that he has brought upon us. And he can be no more at a loſs for proper and natural means to effect this deſign of mercy, than he was to effect his deſigns of judgment. If we *acknowledge God in all our ways*, and by approving our hearts and our conduct before him, make it fit that we ſhould be reinſtated in our late enviable ſituation, he will eaſily provide the means of doing it. *Let us only return to the Lord our God*, and, as we read Hoſ. vi. 1, *he will return to us; and as he has torn, he will alſo heal us; as he has ſmitten, ſo he will bind us up.*

This doctrine of the hand of God being in all events, ought by no means to ſlacken our endeavours to better our condition in any reſpect; becauſe God works by means of the natural paſſions, and the natural activity of man. It is God who gives us day by day our daily bread, which we are therefore inſtructed daily to pray for, as his gift; and yet we diligently plow and ſow the ground, and uſe other natural means to procure bread; well knowing that it cannot be obtained without thoſe

means. In like manner, God has wiſely provided, in the courſe of his Providence, that wiſdom and virtue have a ſtrict and neceſſary connection with the proſperity of a nation. *Righteouſneſs exalteth a nation, and ſin is a reproach to any people.* Prov. xiv. 34.

As to the particulars of our national ſins, which, on a day of public faſting and humiliation, we ſeem to be called upon to confeſs and forſake, I ſhall not, for obvious reaſons, endeavour to point them out to you. With reſpect to ſins of a *perſonal* nature, all men are nearly agreed; but as to ſins that are properly *national*, ſuch as have had the concurrence of the governing powers of the nation, and which they alone can put a ſtop to, different perſons will form very different opinions. Nay, the very ſame things, the ſame political meaſures, that ſome perſons conſider as highly iniquitous, and calling down the vengeance of God upon the nation, others think juſt, neceſſary, and on every account deſerving the higheſt applauſe. Let each perſon then judge for himſelf, and do whatever may be in his power towards the reformation of what he ſhall deem to be amiſs.

While I am exhorting to repentance and reformation of manners, as the only effectual

means

means of removing national calamities, by ſecuring the favour of Divine Providence, I am far from thinking that, with reſpect to morals, we are worſe than other nations: though, conſidering our ſuperior advantages, with reſpect to knowledge and inſtruction, this may be the caſe. Nay, it by no means follows, that though we ſhould be even better than other nations, our ſufferings may not be great and exemplary. We ſee that the moſt innocent individuals are often, for wiſe and excellent purpoſes, made to drink deep of the cup of affliction; and particularly it has not been unfrequent in the conduct of Divine Providence, to make nations mutual ſcourges to each other; and even for the virtuous to ſuffer moſt in the firſt place, though greater puniſhments be reſerved for the more wicked afterwards.

In that moſt juſt war of the eleven tribes againſt that of Benjamin, the former ſuſtained ſeveral ſevere defeats, though the guilty tribe was almoſt exterminated at the laſt. As we read 1 Pet. iv. 17. *Judgment may begin at the houſe of God.* But *if the righteous ſcarcely be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly and the ſinner appear?*

Let us then humble ourſelves before God, and while his *judgments are abroad in the earth*, (Iſa. xxvi. 9) let us *all*, without diſtinction, *learn righteouſneſs*, and be diſpoſed to peace. Let us more eſpecially take care, that a ſtate of war, though conceived to be ever ſo juſt and neceſſary, do not excite a ſpirit of revenge, and lead us to exult in the calamities of our fellow creatures. It is the duty of a Chriſtian to *weep with all that weep*, though the ſufferers be our declared enemies. All men are our brethren, and, like our common parent, we ſhould neither inflict, nor wiſh, any evil, but what we think will be productive of good to them, as well as to ourſelves. This, if we muſt be at war, is to make war like men, and like Chriſtians, if ſuch an idea was not in itſelf abſurd. Every thing elſe is brutal rage, and ſavage barbariſm.

We ſhould ever conſider war as a moſt undeſirable means, to a very deſirable end. Peace ſhould ever be our great object, and to delight in war itſelf, without any reſpect to that end, is nothing better than a diſpoſition to robbery and murder, ſanctified indeed by the laws of men, and diſguiſed by other names; but the ſame thing in the eye of reaſon and of God.

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This obſervation is fully applicable to the war in which we are now engaged with the people of France; eſpecially as they are our neighbours; to whom, as ſuch, we owe every kind and friendly office, and with whom every act of hoſtility, as of bad neighbourhood in any other caſe, ought to be the ſubject of particular regret. For neighbouring nations, like neighbouring families, have it much in their *power* to aſſiſt and befriend each other, and are therefore under a *natural obligation* ſo to do.

This leads me, in the laſt place, to make ſuch obſervations, and ſuggeſt ſuch advices, as appear to me to reſult from the doctrine on which I have been inſiſting, and to be particularly ſuitable to the preſent ſtate of this country.

1. The conſideration of God being the ultimate and proper Author of all events, and conſequently of any calamity in which we may be involved, naturally tends to leſſen our reſentment againſt men, as only the inſtruments in the hand of God; though, in a juſt view of things, it does not affect our perſuaſion of their guilt, which depends altogether on their diſpoſitions and deſigns, and not on

thoſe of the Being who makes uſe of them, and who brings good out of the evil that they intended.

This habitual regard to God in all events, evidently had this happy effect on the mind of Joſeph. He never expreſſed any reſentment againſt his brethren on account of their ſelling him into Egypt, though for many years he had been a great ſufferer by their ſhocking injuſtice and inhumanity. He even ſeemed deſirous that they ſhould not reflect upon themſelves for it, ſo far did his piety and benevolence carry him. *Now therefore*, ſays he to them, (Gen. xlv. 5) *be not grieved, nor angry with yourſelves, that ye ſold me hither: for God ſent me before you to preſerve life, to preſerve you a poſterity in the earth.* Again, when they applied to him after the death of their father, intreating him to forgive them, agreeably to his dying requeſt, he ſaid, Gen. l. 19, *Fear not, for am I in the place of God? As for you, ye thought evil againſt me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to paſs as it is this day, to ſave much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not. I will nouriſh you and your little ones. And he comforted them, and ſpake kindly unto them.*

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The ſame conſideration was the means of reſtraining the anger of David againſt Shimei, who curſed him ſo bitterly in his flight from Abſalom, ſaying, (2 Sam. xvi. 10) *So let him curſe, becauſe the Lord hath ſaid unto him, Curſe David.*

From this principle, every truly pious perſon, who acknowledges the hand of God in all events, is diſpoſed to regard the wicked, as well as the weak, with more compaſſion than anger; and this has a much happier effect on the mind, both in calming its own emotions, and exciting our endeavours to promote the reformation and welfare of others.

If the ſituation of our country, in the eye of God, be ſuch as really to require the calamities we experience, or thoſe that we fear, it is vain to indulge our reſentment againſt the mere inſtruments of them. For if they were removed, others would be found, till the ends of Divine Providence were fully anſwered.

This conſideration ſhould not, however, lead us to a tame and blind acquieſcence in all political meaſures, nor prevent our endeavours to do ourſelves juſtice, whenever we conceive that we have received an injury, and the re-

dreſs of it is in our power; but by leading us to look in the firſt place to the primary cauſe of our ſufferings, our attention will be more calm, and our endeavours better directed, with reſpect to the ſecondary cauſe of them; and we ſhall be better prepared either to ſuffer with reſignation, or to act with vigour, as occaſion may require.

In all caſes, the piety of a true Chriſtian will abate much of his animoſity againſt men. He will wiſh well to his country, (though not excluſively of the reſt of his brethren of mankind) and he will endeavour to make himſelf as uſeful as he poſſibly can; but he will be moſt ſolicitous to promote the cauſe of virtue and religion; confident that this is the beſt means of averting national calamities of every kind, that men and ſtateſmen, friends or enemies, are only inſtruments in the hands of God, and that good will be made to reſult from all evil.

2. The war in which we are now engaged, though peculiar in its nature, and threatening to be peculiarly calamitous to all the nations concerned in it, beſides being attended with the advantage to be expected from calamity in general, in making men ſerious, repreſſing

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vice and exceſs of every kind, and inculcating moderation and ſobriety of mind, promiſes to be peculiarly *inſtructive*, with reſpect to matters both of a civil and of an eccleſiaſtical nature.

This war, in common with moſt others, is in part, no doubt, a war of ambition; the parties concerned in the alliance againſt France (probably all of them except ourſelves) hoping to be gainers, by getting an additional extent of territory, little as ſuch an addition of dominion contributes to the real benefit of the ſubjects, though it adds to the imaginary glory of the prince. But what is peculiar to this war, is, that it is a war reſpecting *the principles of government*, and therefore neceſſarily leads to the diſcuſſion of the ſubject, infinitely more than any writings; and all diſcuſſion leads to knowledge, and all real knowledge to improvement. We may expect, therefore, that, whatever be the iſſue of the war with reſpect to victories or defeats, it will lead to the melioration of the condition of men, as members of civil ſociety.

3. This war is ſometimes called a war of *religion*, it being thought that, in the new government of France, there is to be no proper eſtabliſhment of any form of religion whatever. Here then will be another great

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experiment added to that in North America, to decide the queſtion, whether the buſineſs of *religion*, and that of *civil government*, can be better conducted ſeparately, or in conjunction. But, in fact, experience has already decided this great queſtion. We have already ſeen what it is that an eſtabliſhment of religion has been able to do in France. Under what mode of government in this reſpect, was the great number of unbelievers that is ſo much complained of in France formed, but under an eſtabliſhment, a form of religion preſcribed, and provided for by the ſtate? It is not even pretended, that, excepting the caſe of the emigrant clergy, they have been the *irreligious* that have baniſhed the *religious*. For it is acknowledged that the emigrant nobleſſe had as little religion as the members of the National Convention, all of whom, however, are by no means unbelievers in Chriſtianity. In fact, the civil eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity had almoſt extinguiſhed every thing of real Chriſtianity in the country; the ſuperior clergy themſelves, having, by repute, as little of it as the nobleſſe. And it will not be pretended, that the Atheiſm, now ſo generally aſcribed to the French nation, was produced by the revolution,

lution, and did not exiſt in the country before. Can it be doubted, then, but that a friend to real Chriſtianity muſt be an enemy to the civil eſtabliſhment of it?

4. As a believer in revelation, and conſequently in prophecy, I am led by the preſent aſpect of things, to look forward to events of the greateſt magnitude and importance, leading to the final happy ſtate of the world. At every idea of this kind, unbelievers will ſmile. But I am now addreſſing a ſociety of Chriſtians, believers in revelation and in prophecy, as well as myſelf; and I ſee no reaſon to be aſhamed of this belief.

Three great events ſeem to be pretty clearly announced in the prophetical books of Scripture, and to have a connection with each other, viz. the fall of Antichriſt, (probably the Papal power) that of the Turkiſh empire, and the return of the Jews to their own country, Judea. And, according to the uniform language of prophecy, this laſt event is to be preceded by a ſtate of very great calamity, ſuch as the world had never known before. In Daniel it is ſaid, (chap. xii. 1) *that ſhall be a time of trouble, ſuch as there never was ſince there*

was a nation, even to that ſame time; and at that time ſhall thy people be delivered.

I am far from being ſingular in my ideas on this ſubject. Dr. Hartley, one of the greateſt and moſt intelligent, as well as one of the beſt of men, takes it for granted, that "great "temporal evils and woes," as he ſays (*Obſervations on Man*, Vol. II. p. 220) "will fall "upon the nominal Chriſtian ſtates of theſe "Weſtern parts, this Chriſtian Babylon," as he ſtyles them, "before the great revolution "predicted in the Scriptures; before the "kingdoms of the world, become the king-"dom of the Lord, and of his Chriſt."

After pointing out the probable cauſes of this great calamity, he ſays, p. 445, "It "would be great raſhneſs to fix a time for the "breaking of the ſtorm, that hangs over our "heads; as it is blindneſs and infatuation not "to ſee it, not to be aware that it may break. "And yet this infatuation has always attended "falling ſtates. The kingdoms of Judah and "Iſrael were thus infatuated. Let no one," he then adds, "deceive himſelf, or others. "The preſent circumſtances of the world, "are extraordinary and critical, beyond what "has ever yet happened." If they were ſo when

when he wrote, how much more are they ſo now ?

The power of the Pope is now rapidly on the decline. It has loſt its beſt ſupports; and France, which gave the Popes their temporal ſovereignty, is now moſt hoſtile to them. This exactly agrees with the prophecies. All the other powers of Europe, which *have had but one mind*, (Rev. xvii. 13) *and have given their power and ſtrength to the beaſt*, as this Antichriſtian power is alſo called; theſe are all *to hate the harlot*, (as the ſame power is alſo termed) to *make her deſolate and bare, and even to eat her fleſh and burn her with fire. For God will put it into their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdoms to the beaſt, until the words of God ſhall be fulfilled.*

The Turkiſh empire alſo ſeems to be ſhaking to its baſe, ſo that it will probably ſoon fall; and then, though I own no preſent appearances favour the expectation, I ſhall look with confidence for the accompliſhment of the numerous prophecies relating to the reſtoration of the Jews.

But theſe events are to be preceded by great calamities, ſuch as now perhaps we ſee the beginning of. Happy, my brethren, they, who

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by the help of a firm faith in the Providence of God, and obedience to his will, ſhall be prepared for theſe events; whether we be ſo happy as to ſurvive the ſtorm, and ſee the glorious times which are to follow, or not. But to accompliſh all theſe events, will probably be a work of conſiderable time.

5. While, with the feelings of humanity, and as becomes Chriſtians, we *weep with thoſe that weep*, and who, in the preſent extenſive calamity will, no doubt, be very numerous, both at home among ourſelves, and abroad among our allies and our enemies, let us not loſe ſight of thoſe juſt and enlarged views of things which are ſuggeſted by the conſideration, that *the Lord reigneth*; while this is the caſe, *the earth*, and all the inhabitants of it, have reaſon to *rejoice*, Pſal. xcvii. 1. This conſideration throws a ſtrong beam of light on the darkeſt part of the ſcene that is now, or ever can be, before us; and will enable us, with a calm and ſteady eye, to attend to the origin, the progreſs, and the tendency, of the approaching ſtorm; to the cauſes, and the conſequences, of all the great and calamitous events that will probably come before us, though our own deareſt intereſts, and thoſe of the

the perſons for whom we are the moſt concerned, be involved in them. While we know that nothing can come to paſs but by the appointment of God, the wiſe and benevolent Ruler of the univerſe, we muſt always have more reaſon to hope than to fear, to rejoice than to grieve. And ſince the arguments for the goodneſs of God oblige us to ſuppoſe that there is at all times more happineſs than miſery in the world, and we are no leſs to *rejoice with thoſe that rejoice*, than to *weep with thoſe that weep*, let us not fail to conſider that the *evils* we may ſee are more than balanced by the *good* that at preſent we do not ſee, and eſpecially by that which will be the reſult of the evil.

Since we have reaſon to believe that the world is deſtined to a ſtate of great improvement in knowledge, virtue, and happineſs, let us, where our conduct can have no influence, diſpaſſionately obſerve the wonderful manner in which the great, though probably calamitous, events that are before us will operate to ſo good an end. And eſpecially let each of us, according to our ability and opportunity, zealouſly co-operate with thoſe glorious views of Divine Providence, by doing every thing in

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our power to diminiſh the maſs of evil, and to add to the common ſtock of knowledge, of virtue, and of happineſs.

It is a great and momentous æra to which we are brought. A great improvement will, no doubt, be finally made in the condition of man, and happy will be the willing inſtruments of it. They are, in the language of the Apoſtle, (2 Cor. vi. 1) *workers together with God.* Whether we be immediately employed in advancing any branch of liberal and uſeful knowledge, promoting the cauſe of public virtue, or public liberty, or any thing that tends to general happineſs, we ſhall act an uſeful part in the great drama; and whether we live to finiſh the part we are engaged in acting, or be cut off in the midſt of it, our work, or that part of it that we were appointed to perform, will be completed, and we ſhall receive the plaudit of our Judge, *Well done, good and faithful ſervants.* To thoſe who are uſefully and properly employed, nothing can come amiſs. And though we may not live to ſee the great cataſtrophe to which things are ripening, (for that is probably very diſtant) we may rejoice in ſeeing as much of it as we may be permitted to ſee in this world; and when we awake

awake at the reſurrection, we ſhall find the great work, which had been the object of all our wiſhes and endeavours, completed in its full extent, and ſhall reflect with unſpeakable ſatisfaction on the part that we ourſelves have been called forth, and enabled, to act in it.

Laſtly. In all events, whether we are called forth to do more or leſs, it is our never failing conſolation, that while *the Lord reigneth*, the earth, and eſpecially the righteous in it, have reaſon to rejoice; for though *clouds and darkneſs be round about him, righteouſneſs and judgment are the foundation of his throne.* Pſ. xcvii. 2.

Whatever be the fate of particular individuals, diſtinguiſhed for their virtue and ability, it is wiſely provided in the courſe of Divine Providence, that great occaſions call forth, and in fact create, great characters, ſuch as the occaſions require; and by whoſe generous exertions the evils are ſurmounted, and a better ſtate of things brought about.

If we read the hiſtory of the civil commotions in this country, in France at various periods, or in America, we ſhall find extraordinary men unexpectedly riſing up to act the moſt important parts; men who had never been heard of before, and whom nothing

but ſuch great occaſions could have produced. Read the hiſtory of the great plague in London, that of Marſeilles, or that of any period of great calamity, of any kind, or in any country, at leaſt a chriſtian one, and you will find no want of men proper for them, ſuitable pilots for every ſtorm; and let us not doubt but that this will be the caſe, if ever any great calamity, from which no condition of man is exempt, ſhould befall this country of ours.

It is another conſolation, that ſeaſons of war, and great calamities of any kind, cannot, in their own nature, be of long continuance. In proportion to their violence, they muſt be of ſhort duration; and as in the natural world, ſtorms and hurricanes are of uſe in clearing the atmoſphere, producing a better temperature of air, and a more ſerene and cloudleſs ſky, than could have been had without them, let us not doubt but that the ſame will be the iſſue of ſtorms and hurricanes in the civil world, be their violence ever ſo great, and the devaſtation they make ever ſo extenſive.

If the calamitous times that I fear are approaching ſhould prove to be thoſe which are announced in prophecy, as the greateſt that

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the world ſhall ever experience, whatever be their duration, they will, according to the ſame prophecies, introduce a ſtate of things the moſt truly paradiſiacal and happy, and of the longeſt continuance. It will be the proper *kingdom of God*, and *of heaven*, that kingdom which is typified by *the little ſtone* in the viſion of Nebuchadnezzar, which was *cut out of the mountain without hands*, which *fell upon, and brake in pieces* the whole of that image which repreſented all the preceding empires, and *became* itſelf *a great mountain filling the whole earth.* It will take place of all other modes of government, and continue for ever. Dan. ii. 44, &c.

Coincident with the ſame great epocha in the ſtate of the world may be, according to ſome interpretations of the book of Revelations, what is called the *firſt reſurrection*, or that of the eminently wiſe and good in every preceding age, and eſpecially the perſecuted for righteouſneſs' ſake, who in ſome ſenſe or other will *live and reign with Chriſt a thouſand years.* Rev. xx. 4.

Whether this be literally true, or not, the ſufferings of the eminently pious and virtuous, and of the intrepid in the cauſe of truth and religion, cannot be, comparatively ſpeaking,

of long continuance, and will be ſucceeded by ages of glory and happineſs. Let the oppreſſor do his worſt, there is a limit fixed by a ſuperior power that he cannot paſs. *The wrath of man ſhall be made to praiſe God, and the remainder of that wrath he will reſtrain.* Pſ. lxxvi. 10. Under the government of this great and good Being all the afflictions to which we can be expoſed in this world are in fact *light* and momentary; and if they be endured with patience, fortitude, and true piety, they will be the means of working out for us, as the Apoſtle ſays, 2 Cor. iv. 17, *a far more exceeding*, even *an eternal weight of glory.* They cannot extend beyond the term of the preſent life, which, as James ſays, (ch. iv. 14) is but as *a vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away.*

Having this faith in the government of God, and the prophecies of Scripture, let us *continue ſtedfaſt, immoveable, always abounding in the work of our Lord, knowing that our labour ſhall not finally be in vain in the Lord.*

FINIS.